



Center for Medicaid and State Operations

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SUBJ: HCBS Quality Communication #6
"Software for the Participant Experience Survey (PES) – Elderly/Disabled Version"

DATE: May 24, 2004

This communication is part of our on-going efforts to share information about significant developments in our field that positively impact the quality of services and supports provided through the Medicaid Home and Community-based Waiver (HCBS) program.

With this memo, I am pleased to provide you a copy of software that automates the Participant Experience Survey (PES) – Elderly/Disabled Version.

In October 2003, as part of our second quality communication, CMS provided copies of the **HCBS Quality Tools** CD ROM to each state and CMS Regional Office. The PES – Elderly/Disabled and PES-MR/DD, as well as the HCBS Work Book, were included on the CD ROM. The version we are sending now with this communication is an automated version of the PES-E/D survey. During the testing of the PES, states suggested that we enhance the survey by automating it and creating within the automated version the capacity to analyze survey results and generate reports.

The automated PES-E/D, like its manual predecessor, is a voluntary tool. The enhancements made as part of the automation process were done in order to increase the

user-friendliness and reliability of the survey – in short, to make it easier for states to conduct surveys of participants and use the information for quality improvement.

Some of the advantages of the automated PES are:

- Ease of installation. To use the automated PES, states are not required to license any particular software. The install program, provided as part of the PES software, will automatically load the required software and install the program icon on a desktop. Through the install program, states will be provided with the necessary components to run the survey software.
- Ease of Use. To administer the PES, the interviewer will use a laptop with Windows 2000 or Windows XP loaded on it. She/he will click on the icon that represents the survey software. The survey template that resembles the hard copy version of the PES will appear on the screen. When the participant provides an answer to the survey question, the interviewer will “click” on the appropriate response category. In some cases, the answer will trigger a “skip pattern” – that is, participants can skip a question that is not relevant and the appropriate next question will automatically appear on screen.

When the interviewer completes the survey, the software will store the participants’ responses in an Access database that resides on the laptop. Each interview will be assigned a unique case identifier, allowing each interview to remain distinct but also be downloaded into a centralized database.

Included throughout the software are “prompts” and “helps” to assist the interviewer as they move through the survey questions.

The software design allows States to add additional questions at the end of the survey, and to make some language substitutions; e.g., users can substitute program specific terms like “supports coordinator” where appropriate. However, States may not change or delete questions from the PES.

- Analysis of the survey responses. Analysis of the survey responses provides you with information about the quality of the participants’ experiences with the waiver program along four dimensions: access to care, choice/control, community integration/inclusion, and respect/dignity. With the information from the survey responses, a total of 33 quality indicators can be calculated. Examples of these indicators are:

- Per cent (%) of program participants requiring personal assistance with dressing who report they sometimes are unable to dress because they do not have someone to help them;
- Per cent (%) of program participants who do not help choose their care staff, but would like to.
- Per cent (%) of program participants who do not help direct their staff, but would like to.
- Per cent (%) of program participants who report being physically or verbally abused by current staff.

The software automatically calculates the indicators for you and generates a report. Additional options include a menu-driven system for creating reports and the ability to export data into other software packages for statistical analyses.

If you choose to use the PES software, we are confident that it will enhance the process of gathering participant feedback about the waiver program and generate timely reports about participants' experiences – information that you can use to make systemic improvements in the waiver program.

CMS is currently working on automation of the PES-MR/DD version, with an expected completion date in early 2005.

Technical assistance with installation and use of the PES software is available through CMS's National Technical Assistance Contractor, Medstat. More information about how to access that technical assistance, as well as information about obtaining a User ID and Pass code for the software, is located on our website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/waivers/quality.asp>

As always, we invite your feedback about the PES software and about these quality communications, which you can send to us via e-mail at hcbsquality@cms.hhs.gov

Enclosure – PES Software